

## FAMILY PORTRAIT IN COLOR

Dusk. No sun. October. Rain. Chills. Cold. Coughs.

Steven keeps gunning my blue Volkswagen  
In the driveway running over the pup-  
Py. The tires are white walls. All flat.

In the kitchen Tom holds a half-filled quart  
Pepsi bottle in his cut-up left hand.  
He is glaring at Joe. Joe glares at him.

My red brick paper weight in his left hand  
Joe, sweating hard, stands by the kitchen door.

I take a swig of Pepsi from a cup.  
I pick my nose. I am reading a green  
Textbook on Dante in my gray bedroom

Dreaming of black sexual abandon  
Planning a term paper explicating

The concept of nothingness in Sartre.

Praying her new jade colored rosary  
Mother drinks orange pekoe tea in her room.

Jerry holds my ball peen hammer in both hands.  
He peers over the kitchen window plants.  
Foul black phrases roll through the green drapes.

Michael is crying and crying. The tears  
Soak his Cathedral Cardinals T shirt.

Upstairs my sister pulls her pink quilt wrap  
Tighter around her thighs. She screams out threats  
To call the police department. Now!

Father has been dead for four and a third years.  
Enough rain has fallen on his green grave  
In gray South Omaha to float a battle ship.

To float two battle ships.

-- John McKernan

Huntington WV